

In the Specification:

Please amend the Paragraph beginning at Page 3, Line 21, as follows:

According to one aspect of the present invention, there is provided an implement for manipulating a knotted suture during a surgical procedure, comprising: an elongated shaft having a proximal end engageable by the user for manipulating the instrument, and a distal end engageable with the knotted suture to be manipulated; the distal end of the elongated shaft having an end face formed with a recess for receiving the knot of the suture; characterized in that the distal end of the elongated shaft is formed with an open slot starting from a location spaced from the end face and ~~leading-extending along the~~ outer surface of the elongated shaft to the recess in the end face, such as to enable the knotted suture to be introduced into the slot and the recess by effecting a sidewise movement of the knotted suture with respect to the elongated shaft, or vice-versa.

Please amend the Paragraph beginning at Page 4, Line 15, as follows:

According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided an implement for manipulating a knotted suture during a surgical procedure, and for removing an excess length of a suture, comprising: an elongated shaft having a proximal end engageable by the user for manipulating the implement, and a distal end engageable with the knotted suture to be manipulated; the distal end of the elongated shaft having an end face formed with a recess for receiving the knot of the suture; the distal end of the elongated shaft being further formed with an open slot starting from a location spaced from the end face and ~~leading-extending along the outer surface of the elongated shaft~~ to the recess in the end face, such as to enable the knotted suture to be introduced into the slot and the recess by effecting a sidewise movement of the knotted suture with respect to the shaft member, or vice-versa; and a tubular cutter member enclosing the elongated shaft and effective to cut the suture in the slot upon movement of the elongated shaft with respect to the tubular cutter member, or vice-versa.

Please amend the Paragraph beginning at Page 9, Line 12, as follows:

Thus, the distal end 132 of elongated shaft 130 also includes an end face 134 counter-sunk to define a recess 135 for receiving the knot 151 of the knotted suture 150. In this case, however, the distal end 132 of elongated shaft 130 is formed with an open slot 133 starting from a location spaced from the end face 134 and ~~leading~~ extending along the outer surface of the elongated shaft to recess 135 in the end face, such as to enable the knotted suture to be introduced into the slot and the recess by effecting a sidewise movement of the knotted suture with respect to the elongated shaft, or vice-versa. Slot 133 is of a width to accommodate a wide range of suture sizes and materials.